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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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Geoffrey Blake

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10/22/2003

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EXAMINER

ESTRADA, ANGEL R

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2831

DATE MAILED: 10/22/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/804,159

Applicant(s)

BLAKE, GEOFFREY

Examiner

Angel R. Estrada

Art Unit

2831

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 10-17 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3, 5-9 and 18-24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 4 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 4.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 5 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Simon (US 3,809,798) in view of Mullen, Jr. (US 6,300,569; hereinafter Mullen).

Regarding claim 1, Simon discloses a connector (see figure 2) for connecting conduit (12) to a junction box having an opening (4) therein, said connector (see figure 2) comprising a base (1) for receiving said conduit (12) at approximately a right angle to said opening (see figure 2), said base (1); and a cap (9) configured to cover at least a portion of said base (1) with a portion of said conduit (12) disposed between said cap and said base (see figure 2); but Simon lacks said base having at least one cap retainer tab and said cap having a slot configured to receive said retainer tab to establish a snap-fit connection between said base and said cap. Mullen teaches a connector (see figure 1) for connecting a conduit (33), said connector having a base (30) with a cap retainer tab (52, 54) and a cap (32) with a slot (60,62) configured to receive said retainer tab (52, 54) to establish a snap fit connection between the base and the cap (see figure 2). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the connector with a retainer tab in the base and a

slot in the cap to receive the retainer tab as taught by Mullen to provide means to secure the cap to the base without using any tools.

Regarding claim 5, Simon discloses the connector (see figure 2), wherein said base (1) further comprises a retaining flange (3) and wherein said cap (9) further comprises a flange slot (see figure 2) for receiving said retainer flange (3).

Regarding claim 7, Simon discloses the connector (see figure 2), wherein said base (1) further comprises at least one stop tab (15) for resisting motion of said conduit (12) relative to said base (1) toward said opening (4) in said junction box.

2. Claims 2, 3, 6, 8 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Simon (US 3,809,798) in view of Mullen, Jr. (US 6,300,569; hereinafter Mullen) as applied in claim 1, and further in view of Stikeleather et al (US 4,880,387; hereinafter Stikeleather).

Regarding claim 2, the modified Simon discloses the claimed invention except for the base having a plurality of resiliently deformable elements configured to establish a snap fit connection with said opening in said junction box. Stikeleather teaches a connector (see figure 1) having a base member with a plurality of resilient deformable elements (30) configured to establish a snap fit connection with an opening in a junction box (see figure 1). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide to the modified Simon with a base having a plurality of resiliently deformable elements configured to establish a snap fit connection

with the opening in the junction box as taught by Stikeleather to provide means to secure the base to the junction box without using any tools.

Regarding claim 3, the modified Simon teaches that that resiliently deformable elements (as taught by Stikeleather) extend from an annular bottom portion (6) defining an opening through which wires in said conduit (12) may pass to enter said junction box (see figure 2).

Regarding claim 6, Simon discloses the claimed invention except for the base having at least one protrusion positioned to extend into a helical groove in said conduit. Stikeleather teaches a connector (10) having a protrusion (15) positioned into a helical groove in a conduit (see figure 1). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide to Simon's base with at least one protrusion to extend into a helical groove in said conduit as taught by Stikeleather to firmly secure the conduit to the base.

Regarding claim 8, Simon discloses the claimed invention except for the base comprises an electrically conductive material for establishing an electrical connection with said conduit. Stikeleather teaches a connector (10) being made of an electrically conductive material for establishing an electrical connection with said conduit (column 2 line 14-20). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make Simon's connector of an electrically conductive material for establishing an electrical connection with said conduit as taught by Stikeleather.

Regarding claim 9, Simon discloses the claimed invention except for the cap having at least one protrusion positioned to extend into a helical groove in said conduit.

Stikeleather teaches a connector (10) having a protrusion (15) positioned into a helical groove in a conduit (see figure 1). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide to Simon's base with at least one protrusion to extend into a helical groove in said conduit as taught by Stikeleather to firmly secure the conduit to the cap.

3. Claims 18-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Simon (US 3,809,798) in view of Stikeleather et al (US 4,880,387; hereinafter Stikeleather).

Regarding claim 18, Simon discloses a connector (see figure 2) for connecting conduit (12) to a junction box having an opening (4) therein, said connector (see figure 1) comprising a base (1) for receiving said conduit (12) at approximately a right angle to said opening (4) and a cap (9) configured to cover at least a portion of said base (1) with a portion of said conduit (12) disposed between said cap and said base (see figure 2); but Simon lacks the base having a plurality of resiliently deformable elements configured to establish a snap fit connection with said opening in said junction box. Stikeleather teaches a connector (see figure 1) having a base member with a plurality of resilient deformable elements (30) configured to establish a snap fit connection with an opening in a junction box (see figure 1). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide to Simon with a base having a plurality of resiliently deformable elements configured to establish a snap fit

connection with the opening in the junction box as taught by Stikeleather to provide means to secure the base to the junction box without using any tools.

Regarding claim 19, the modified Simon discloses the resiliently deformable elements (as taught by Stikeleather) extend from an annular bottom portion (6) defining an opening through which wires in said conduit (12) may pass to enter said junction box (see figure 2).

Regarding claim 20, Simon discloses the connector (see figure 2), wherein said base (1) further comprises a retaining flange (3) and wherein said cap (9) further comprises a flange slot (see figure 2) for receiving said retainer flange (3).

Regarding claim 21, Simon discloses the claimed invention except for the base having at least one protrusion positioned to extend into a helical groove in said conduit. Stikeleather teaches a connector (10) having a protrusion (15) positioned into a helical groove in a conduit (see figure 1). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide to Simon's base with at least one protrusion to extend into a helical groove in said conduit as taught by Stikeleather to firmly secure the conduit to the base.

Regarding claim 22, Simon discloses the connector (see figure 2), wherein said base (1) further comprises at least one stop tab (15) for resisting motion of said conduit (12) relative to said base (1) toward said opening (4) in said junction box.

Regarding claim 23, Simon discloses the claimed invention except for the base comprises an electrically conductive material for establishing an electrical connection with said conduit. Stikeleather teaches a connector (10) being made of an electrically

conductive material for establishing an electrical connection with said conduit (column 2 line 14-20). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make Simon's connector of an electrically conductive material for establishing an electrical connection with said conduit as taught by Stikeleather.

Regarding claim 24, Simon discloses the claimed invention except for the cap having at least one protrusion positioned to extend into a helical groove in said conduit. Stikeleather teaches a connector (10) having a protrusion (15) positioned into a helical groove in a conduit (see figure 1). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide to Simon's base with at least one protrusion to extend into a helical groove in said conduit as taught by Stikeleather to firmly secure the conduit to the cap.

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Claims 10-17 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The primary reason for the indication of the allowability of claims 10-17 is:

Regarding claims 10-17 is the inclusion therein in combination as currently claimed of the limitation of connector comprising a base having a plurality of spring members for resiliently retained said conduit at approximately a right angle to said opening in said junction box.

This limitation was found in claims 10-17, and is neither disclosed nor taught by the prior art of record, alone or in combination.

5. Claim 4 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The primary reason for the indication of the allowability of claim 4 is:

Regarding claim 4 is the inclusion therein in combination as currently claimed of the limitation of said base having a plurality of spring members for resiliently retained said conduit at approximately a right angle to said opening in said junction box.

This limitation was found in claim 4, and is neither disclosed nor taught by the prior art of record, alone or in combination.

Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Bing (US 6, 580,029), Amberger (US 5,693,908), Uchida et al (US 5,563,378), Blake (US 6,380,483), Guginsky (US 5,283,393), Ritzmann (US 5,160,811), Fridenberg et al (US 6,013,875), Lifka (US 2,967,722), Hulsman et al (US 6,593,531) and Wagganer (US 6,069,317) disclose a connector for flexible electrical conduits.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to Angel R. Estrada at telephone number (703) 305-0853. The Examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday (8:30 -5:00).


Art Unit: 2831

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Dean Reichard can be reached on (703) 308-3682. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.

AE

October 14, 2003


DEAN A. REICHARD
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
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